

Message Text

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17/15
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W
----- 018779

R 040700Z FEB 75
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1266
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 0744

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR TAGS INFO.

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AF,, PK, PFOR
SUBJ: AFGHAN-PAK RELATIONS

1. I HAD MY FIRST GOOD TALK FEBRUARY 3 WITH THE NEW
PAK AMBASSADOR TO AFGHANISTAN ALI ARSHAD. WE HIT IT OFF
WELL AND HE EXPRESSED THE DESIRE FOR FUTURE TALKS. TO
ASSIST AND PROTECT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS RELATIONSHIP,
I HAVE MADE THIS MESSAGE EXDIS.

2. WE REVIEWED RECENT EVENTS IN PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS,
ALL OF WHICH ARE WELL KNOWN TO THE DEPARTMENT AND
EMBASSY ISLAMABAD. ARSHAD SAID THAT FOR THE TIME BEING
THE IDEA OF HIGH-LEVEL TALKS IS MOOT AND THAT HE IS
CONCENTRATING ON TRYING TO REMOVE MISUNDERSTANDINGS
IN BOTH CAPITALS RESULTING FROM PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON
BOTH SIDES. IN THIS CONNECTION HE MENTIONED THE FLAP
OVER BHUTTO'S INVITATION TO DAOUD AND HIS EFFORTS TO
CONVINCE THE AFGHANS OF BHUTTO'S SINCERITY AND THAT
BHUTTO'S GOING PUBLIC WITH THE INVITATION WAS NOT A
PROPAGANDA PLOY BUT A REFLECTION OF BHUTTO'S POLITICAL
STYLE IN TRYING TO GET PUBLIC OPINION IN PAKISTAN
BEHIND A POLICY OF RAPPROCHEMENT WITH AFGHANISTAN.
LIKEWISE ARSHAD SAID THAT DURING HIS RECENT TWO OR THREE
WEEK STAY IN ISLAMABAD HE HAD TRIED TO CORRECT MIS-
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UNDERSTANDINGS THERE ABOUT CERTAIN PUBLIC STATEMENTS

OF WAHEED ABDULLAH, FOR EXAMPLE IN KUWAIT WHERE ABDULLAH SAID HE HAD NOT ATTACKED BHUTTO AS HE WAS QUOTED AS HAVING DONE IN THE KUWAIT PRESS.

3. ARSHAD SAID HIS OTHER MAIN EFFORT IS TO GET THE LEVEL AND TONE OF PROPAGANDA FROM EACH SIDE REDUCED. HE FEELS THIS PROPAGANDA FEEDS ON ITSELF AND ESCALATES TO THE DETRIMENT OF ANY EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE ATMOSPHERE. INTERESTINGLY HE SAID THAT HE HAD SHOWN TO FOREIGN MINISTRY AND RADIO OFFICIALS IN ISLAMABAD TRANSCRIPTS PROVIDED HIM BY THE AFGHANS OF ALLEGED PAKISTANI PROPAGANDA BROADCASTS AGAINST THE DAOUD REGIME AND DAOUD PERSONALLY AND THAT THESE OFFICIALS DENIED THAT ANY SUCH BROADCASTS HAD BEEN MADE. (WE HAVE SUPPLIED SIMILAR TRANSCRIPTS GIVEN US BY THE AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTRY TO EMBASSY ISLAMABAD AND NEA/PAB). ARSHAD HAS REQUESTED THAT TAPES BE MADE OF ALL PAK BROADCASTS AIMED AT AFGHANISTAN SO THAT IN THE FUTURE HE WILL BE ABLE TO COMPARE THESE TAPES WITH THE AFGHAN TRANSCRIPTS.

4. ARSHAD EXPRESSED PUZZLEMENT ABOUT WHAT THE AFGHANS REALLY WANT, NOTING THAT THEIR FORMULATIONS VARY FROM TIME TO TIME AND OFFICIAL TO OFFICIAL. HE IS CONCERNED THAT THEIR REAL AIM IS TO KEEP THE PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE ALIVE IN THE HOPE THAT SOME DAY PAKISTAN WILL DISINTEGRATE. HE SAID THAT THE IMMEDIATE AFGHAN OBJECTIVE WOULD APPEAR TO BE TO GET THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT TO AGREE TO HAVE A MEETING TO DISCUSS, AS THE AFGHANS PUT IT, "THE ONLY PROBLEM BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES". BUT, HE STATED, THE GOP CANNOT AGREE TO SUCH A MEETING IF IT WOULD IMPLY THAT PAKISTAN ACCEPTS THAT THE PUSHTUN-BALUCH PROBLEM IS AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM. MOREOVER, HE NOTED THE FACT THAT THE AFGHANS CONTINUE, AS THE AFGHAN CHARGE DID TO AZIZ AHMED IN ISLAMABAD RECENTLY (KABUL 0315) TO PUT UNACCEPTABLE CONDITIONS ON ANY SUCH MEETING.

5. IN SUM, ARSHAD IS DETERMINED TO DO HIS BEST TO IMPROVE THE ATMOSPHERE BUT REALIZES HIS IS A TOUGH JOB. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAYS HE HAS MANY AFGHAN FRIENDS
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FROM HIS PREVIOUS TOUR HERE BUT THEY ARE AFRAID TO BE SEEN WITH HIM AND FOR THEIR PROTECTION HE HAS YET TO INVITE ANY OF THEM TO HIS RESIDENCE.

6. SUBSEQUENT TO THIS CONVERSATION, THE AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR, WHO IS RESIDENT IN ISLAMABAD, TOLD ME THAT HE HAD LEARNED IN ISLAMABAD RECENTLY THAT AGHA SHAHI IS TENTATIVELY PLANNING A VISIT TO KABUL AROUND MARCH 12.

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